

Testimony of
Bill Murray
Connecticut Education Association - Retired

Before the
Appropriations Committee

Re:

HB 5037 An Act Adjusting The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June 30, 2023

TRB Agency Budgets

February 17, 2022

Good afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Miner, Representative France, and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Bill Murray and I am a retired teacher who serves as the President of the Connecticut Education Association Retired (CEA-R). CEA-R is part of the Connecticut Education Association and represents the interest of our retired members across the state. I am also Vice Chair of the Teachers' Retirement Board and serve on the Insurance Committee.

I testify today in support of Governor Lamont's mid-term budget adjustments affecting the Teachers' Retirement Board.

We are pleased to see that Governor Lamont has proposed to fully fund the annual teachers retirement system contribution, increase funding toward the unfunded liability using surplus funds, and to fully-fund the retiree health insurance fund. We thank Governor Lamont for his continued commitment to keeping the teachers' pension system sound.

However, we do strongly believe that an increase to the health insurance subsidy is long overdue. The state's health insurance subsidy provides retired teachers who are under age 65 \$110 per month to purchase coverage from their last school district. It also provides \$220 a month for those over age 65 who do not qualify for Medicare.

These monthly \$110/\$220 subsidies were established in 1996. That's 26 years ago. As you know, medical care cost has skyrocketed during that time. I think officially costs have risen 2.3 times. These retired teachers are paying \$10,000 or more per person for insurance. In my dual roles, I receive many calls and emails related to insurance issues. I can assist people on our TRB insurance plan with but I can't help people who are burdened by the insurance cost increase from their former employers. Only the state can help. On behalf of our organization and all retired teachers who fall into this category, I urge committee members to consider increasing the subsidies to \$220 and \$440 respectively.

Thank you,
Bill Murray